

Gentlemen:

I am concerned about the proposed plan to de-regulate our radio and television and newspaper industries.

Regulations concerning public information systems should be based on benefits to the public not increased profits for a few companies. Comments made by a TV company official stating that one of the benefits would be reducing the required number of their editorial staff do not impress me. How can having fewer people involved benefit the public when only the companies profit? Is that a good reason to change the law?

One company which now owns a large number of radio station has shown and continues to show disturbing disregard for the public. Clear Channel owns a large number of bill boards in Minnesota. Those located in some residential areas have been listed as non-conforming for a number of years. They are to be taken down when the cost of repair or maintenance of the structure exceeds 50% of the cost of the whole structure. Clear Channel has made changes not allowed by the law and continues to file legal appeals and use other delays which require our city council to expend both time and money.

A few years ago one of the local radio stations was selected to carry the Howard Stern radio program. Clear Channel, who owns the radio station, put up a very large advertisement featuring a partially clad young woman advertising the Stern radio program. I believe the billboard used was owned by Clear Channel. Many people in the neighborhood found the billboard offensive; the state highway patrol finally requested that it be taken down since it was a serious distraction and a driving hazard on the freeway. The company's decisions appear to be driven by greed, not service to the public good. One can only hope that in the future, rather than gobbling up more responsible companies, some of its various divisions will be removed from the existing management.

Our free enterprise system has not prospered by limiting companies in their activities, but I do feel there should continue to be laws which keep one company or corporation from owning all the sources of information for any segment of the citizens. In a community with a number of independent media sources, someone will cover important events even if they are to the disadvantage of other media sources.

It has been said that since the laws regulating the ownership of radio, television, and newspapers were written a number of years ago, before cable and the internet, that they are out of date and are a hindrance to the public good. Please remember that a series of "laws" written long ago and delivered to a people in a desert still resonate. Age alone does not invalidate good principles.

Sincerely,

James Nessa